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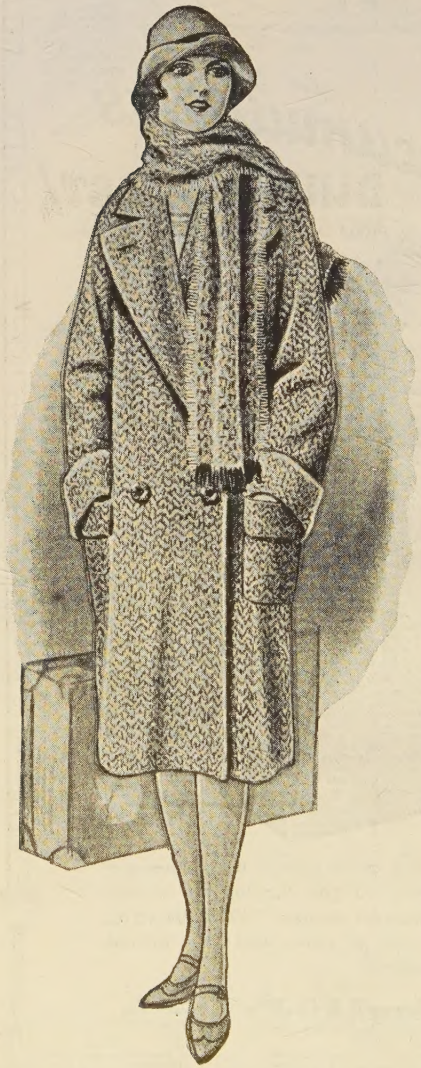

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NOTES

THE COMPOSER

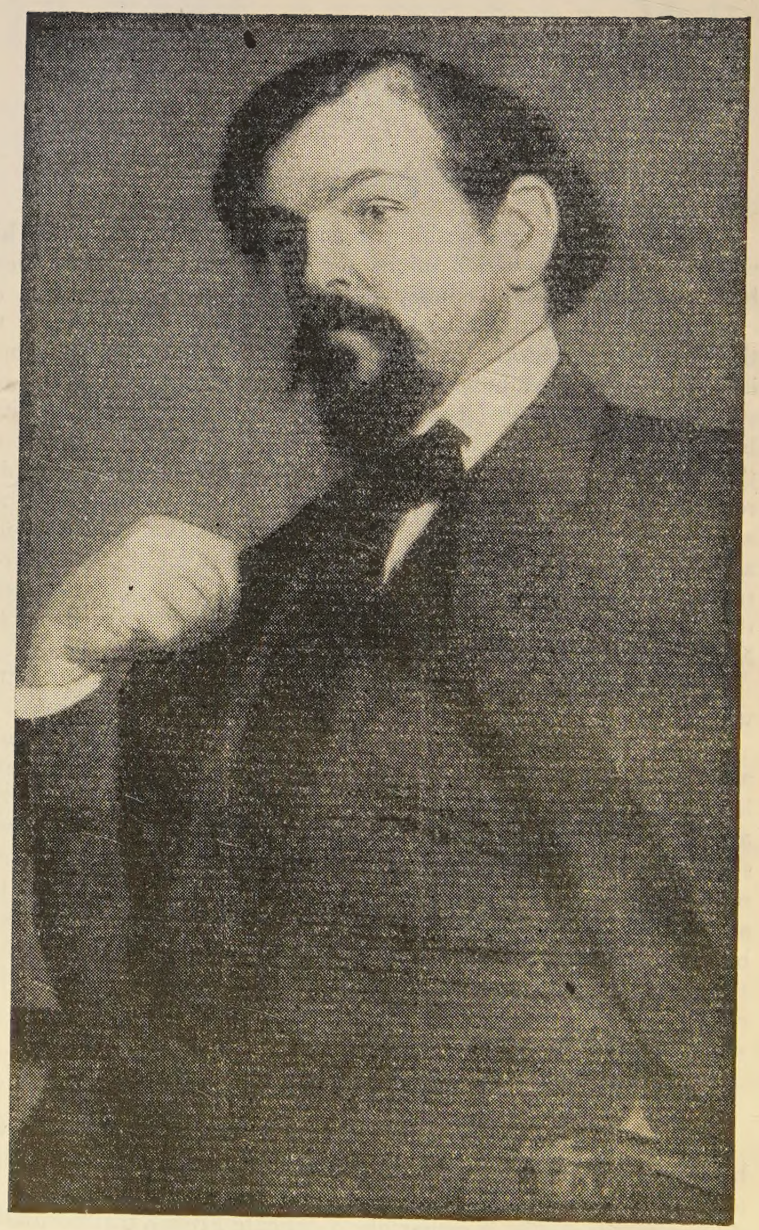
ALTHOUGH there was nothing in his family tradition, nor in his early surroundings, which might account for his strongly musical bent, Claude Achille Debussy had decided at the early age of eleven upon his future career. That was his age on his entry to the Paris Conservatoire, in 1873. He remained until 1884, when he won the highest honour which the Conservatoire bestows on students, the Prix de Rome, having been runner-up the year before. After the years of study in Italy, which the winning of that prize entails, he returned to Paris and settled down to a simple, retired life of composition, appearing only rarely in public, either as performer or conductor. Nor did he ever accept any public appointment. The London musical public had only two opportunities of welcoming him, in 1908 and 1909, when he conducted the Queen's Hall Orchestra, in " L'Après-midi d'un faune," " La Mer," and the " Nocturnes."

In his latter years he suffered from a great deal of ill-health, and was only in his fifty-sixth year when he died, in Paris, in 1918.

Already during his lifetime he was acclaimed by his compatriots, and latterly by the whole world of music, as the founder and leader of what is called the French impressionist school of music, and it is difficult to think of any other term which might so well sum up the qualities which stamp his music as individual and new. It is a little difficult to dissociate from it something of the artificiality, something of the pose, which were definitely traits in his own rather wayward character; it has something, too, of the delicacy and neatness of his musical ancestors, touched and coloured by his own sensitive command of fantasy.

THE OPERA

There has probably been no other composer who could so well have realised in music the subtle charm of Maeterlinck's " Pelléas and Mélisande " as Debussy has done. The Opera, both in its tale and in its music, is rather like a delicate French transformation



DEBUSSY

of Wagner's " Tristan," with this difference—that Wagner's figures, legendary though they are, appear to the hearer as real flesh and blood mortals. The persons of Maeterlinck's Play and Debussy's Opera move and have their being rather as unreal shades, working out their melancholy fate in a sort of hushed calm. The tale unfolds itself, briefly, as follows:—

ACT I.

Scene 1. *A Forest.* Golaud has lost his way while hunting, and finds Mélisande, a strange fairy-like creature, whom he at length persuades to follow him to his castle.

Scene 2. *In the Castle.* Geneviève is reading to the old King Arkel a letter which Golaud has written to his half-brother Pelléas, telling of his marriage to the mysterious Mélisande, whom he loves devotedly. He is in doubt whether the King will approve, and asks Pelléas to give him a sign so that he may know. The King understands, and tells Pelléas to give his brother the desired sign.

Scene 3. *Outside the Castle.* Mélisande's sense of gloom in the castle, along with Pelléas' presence, gives the hearer, though not the two young people themselves, a hint of the tragedy in store.

ACT II.

Scene 1. *By the Fountain in the Park.* In the first scene of the Second Act the two are again together, and Mélisande, leaning over a pool of water, loses Golaud's ring of betrothal.

Scene 2. *In the Castle.* At the very moment when she lost the ring, Golaud's horse threw him, and now, while she is nursing him, he discovers its loss, and sends her out to look for it.

Scene 3. *A Grotto.* In the next scene we see her looking for it, with Pelléas guiding her through a dark cavern in the rocks, where a sense of death is at hand.

ACT III.

Scene 1. *A Tower of the Castle.* In Act III. Mélisande stands at a window of the castle combing her long hair. Pelléas comes to say farewell, and her long hair falls over his head. As they sit thus, prolonging their farewells, Golaud comes to chide them for their foolishness.

Scene 2. *A Vault beneath the Castle*, whither Golaud has led Pelléas to warn him to shun Mélisande.

Scene 3. *Before the Castle.* Golaud's little son appears now; Golaud is trying to discover from him what he knows of Pelléas and Mélisande. He begins to realise how much older he is than his strange bride.

ACT IV.

Scene 1. *A Room in the Castle.* Pelléas has not yet gone, and begs Mélisande for one more meeting. The old King joins them; Mélisande has grown very dear to him, and he guesses something of her unhappiness. Golaud appears, and rage overcomes him at the seeming innocence of his young wife; he throws her to her knees, and drags her over the room by her long hair.

Scene 2. *By the Fountain in the Park.* Pelléas and Mélisande are bidding one another farewell, when Golaud comes upon them and slays Pelléas, Mélisande flying from him.

ACT V.

Scene 1. *A Room in the Castle.* The last scene of all shows us Mélisande dying, with Golaud, the King, and a Physician round her.

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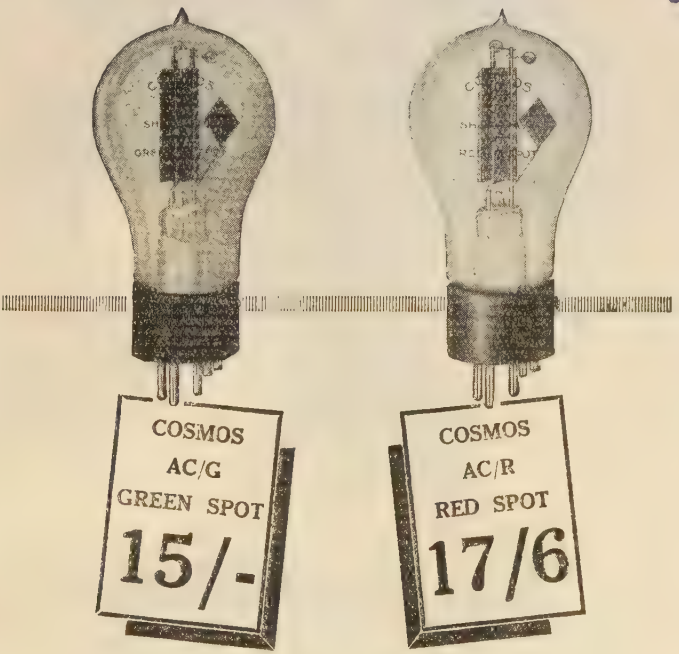

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PELLÉAS AND MÉLISANDE

Opera in Five Acts

By DEBUSSY

The Words of the Opera are taken from the Play by Maurice Maeterlinck

The Text is reprinted by permission of Messrs. Durand et Cie, Paris

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Arkel, King of Allemonde	*Bass*
Geneviève, Mother of Pelléas and Golaud	*Alto*
Pelléas } King Arkel's	*Tenor*
Golaud } Grandsons	*Baritone*
Mélisande	*Soprano*
Yniold, Golaud's Son by his first marriage	*A child's voice*
A Physician	*Bass*

ACT I.

Scene 1.

A Forest.

Golaud. I am deeper in the forest, there is no path. Who knows how far by my prey I have been led. Yet I thought that at last my spear had found its mark, and I see some traces of blood. But after all it is hidden from sight. I fear I have wandered; the forest deepens, and the dogs will never find me here. I will go the way that I came. I hear a sigh. Oh! Oh! What is that yonder by the well? A forlorn little maiden is weeping in despair. She does not hear my step. I cannot yet see her face. Oh, why do you weep? Be not afraid, you have nothing to fear now. Tell me why you weep alone in the forest.

Mélisande. Oh, leave me alone. Oh, leave me alone.

Gol. Be not afraid. In your grief I may help. Oh, marvellous beauty!

Mél. Oh, leave me alone. Have pity on my grief.

Gol. I would not do you harm. Now look. I will not stir from here. Do not fear me. Be not afraid. Has anyone done you a harm?

Mél. Oh, yes, yes, yes.

Gol. Who dared to harm a poor helpless maid?

Mél. All. All.

Gol. Tell me, what did they do?

Mél. I am afraid to tell you.

Gol. Oh, stay. You must not weep like this. Whence do you come?

Mél. His house I have fled. Away. Away.

Gol. Yes, but tell me whence you fled away.

Mél. I know not whither . . . where am I? . . . here I am lost; here am I far from home; I am a stranger here.

Gol. Where is your home? What land do you come from?

Mél. Far away. Far. Far.

Gol. What is it glitters there, deep in the well?

Mél. Oh that? Ah, the diadem he gave me to wear. When I was weeping it fell.

Gol. But it is golden. Who gave you so precious a gift as this bright jewel? Perhaps with my arm I can reach it.

Mél. No. No. Oh, let it stay. Oh, leave it there. I would rather I died, than take up its burden.

Gol. I can easily regain it if you wish. Fear not. There is no danger.

Mél. Oh, leave it there. If you take it from there, I seek death in the water.

Gol. No, no. I obey your desire. . . . So near does it lie to my hand I fain would try. . . . 'Tis a beautiful jewel. Have you wander'd long and far in your flight?

Mél. Yes, yes. What is your name?

Gol. The Prince Golaud I am called. Grandson am I of Arkel, who reigns over Allemonde.

Mél. Oh. There is silver and grey in your hair.

Gol. Yes, even white; the years leave their traces.

Mél. And your beard is grey. Why do you look at me in surprise?

Gol. Let me look in your eyes; do you not ever close your eyes?

Mél. Yes, yes. In the night they are closed.

Gol. Why do your eyes appear so full of wonder?

Mél. You seem . . . you look so strong.

Gol. I am no stronger than many others.

Mél. Oh, say . . . what led your steps to this place?

Gol. I cannot say, I know not. I was hunting in the wood,

when a wild boar afar I saw; I followed and strayed from the path. . . . How young you look, fair maiden! Oh, what is your age?

Mél. I begin to feel the cold.

Gol. You cannot stay here; come away.

Mél. No, no, here will I stay.

Gol. You cannot stay here, it is not safe, there is danger; night is near, and soon will darkness fall; have you no fear? By what name are you known?

Mél. Mélisande.

Gol. You cannot remain here all alone, Mélisande; you must come with me.

Mél. I will stay here.

Gol. You cannot stay in the darkness. No one can say what the night may bring forth. Have you no fear . . . in the darkness? I cannot desert you, Mélisande; come here and give me your hand.

Mél. Oh, oh, will you not go?

Gol. Be not afraid. Do you fear to take my hand? You may follow my road. Darkness is falling fast; it is colder. Come, follow my steps.

Mél. Where do they lead?

Gol. I do not know. We are lost in the wood.

Scene 2.

In the Castle.

Geneviève. Let me read what he writes to his brother Pelléas: "One day I came upon her in tears at the edge of the water; 'twas in the woods, where my way I had lost. Who she is I know not, nor yet her age, nor whence she has come, and even to question her I fear, for she has met with some shock that has filled her with terror, and if I ask her what may have happened to give her pain, she begins to weep anew, catching her breath as a child does. So deep is her grief that one fears. It is strange that six months have passed since I made her my wife, and I scarcely know more of her now than at our first meeting. But in the meantime, dear Pelléas, whom I love beyond a brother, although 'tis true we are not sons of the same father, will you prepare the way for my return? . . . I feel that my mother is sure to forgive me ere long. But I fear Arkel, though I know he is good and kind. If, however, you think he will consent to receive her as if she were a daughter, await the third evening that follows this letter, and then light a

beacon upon the high tower that faces the sea. I shall see it burn from the deck of our good vessel. If not, I shall pass on and return nevermore." What do you say?

Arkel. I have naught to say. To us his news may be surprising. That is because all destiny appears to our eyes as if reversed, and our own no less than others. . . . From a boy he always followed my counsel till now. I only thought of his happiness in bidding him ask for Ursula's fair hand in marriage. He could not remain here alone, and since the sad death of his wife his grief has clouded all his days. And I had hoped this marriage would end many years of war and heal many a quarrel, but now he has carved his own fate. Let it be as he has desired. Never have I set my will in the way of anyone's future. He must know his fate better than I. Nothing ever happens in vain—it is fate's mysterious working.

Gen. He always was so prudent and wise, so strong and so earnest. And since the death of his wife his thought has been only of his son, our little Yniold. He has forgotten it all. What is to happen?

Ark. Who is coming, whose step is that?

Gen. 'Tis Pelléas. Tears in his eyes.

Ark. Is it you, Pelléas? Come a little nearer, come and stand here in the sunshine.

Pelléas. Dear grandfather, when the letter from my brother arrived there was another, a second letter, from my friend Marcellus, who lies at death's door. In his extremity he needs me. He says he knows with precision the day he will answer death's call. By departing at once I may reach him in time to say farewell, but not if I wait another moment.

Ark. Yet it would be wise to wait with us a few days. We know not what may befall on your brother's expected arrival. Lies your father not upon a bed of sickness, here just above us, and nearer to death perhaps than your friend? Can you rightly choose between a father and a friend?

Gen. See that the beacon is lit from to-night, Pelléas.

Scene 3.

Outside the Castle.

Mél. Darkness veils the gardens at dusk. And what mighty trees! All round the palace the wood is so dense.

Gen. Yes. It affected me the same long ago when I first came here; it impresses deeply all who come here. There are places I

know where never glimpse of sunshine is seen. But soon one is accustomed. 'Tis so long ago. 'Tis so long ago. Soon it will be forty years that I have lived in this place. Turn your eyes away, over there, where the light hovers over the sea.

Mél. I hear a sound of footsteps below.

Gen. Yes, someone comes towards us this way. Ah! 'Tis Pelléas. He looks as if he still were tired. He had been waiting so long till you came.

Mél. But he cannot have seen us.

Gen. Yes, I believe he has, but knows not whether he should come here—Pelléas, Pelléas. Is it you?

Pell. Yes. I came out for a walk by the sea.

Gen. Also we, for the sake of the light; I think it is a little lighter here. And yet the sea is wrapped in darkness.

Pell. We shall have perhaps another storm to-night. They have come nearly every night, these violent storms, and yet the sea appears so peaceful and so calm. One might set sail almost unawares, never to see land again.

Mél. There's a vessel leaving port.

Pell. A big ship it seems to be that is leaving, for her lights are very high. We shall see her soon more clearly, sailing across the broad streak of silver light.

Gen. But perhaps we shall see her no more. The mist on the sea will conceal her like a veil.

Pell. Now it seems to be lifting gently from the sea.

Mél. Yes, and far over there I see a bright little light that I saw not before.

Pell. 'Tis a beacon. There are many other lights, but we cannot see them yet.

Mél. Now the light shines over the vessel. She is far on her way.

Pell. She has all her sails unfurled.

Mél. It is the ship that brought me to this land. Her sails are broad and mighty. By her sails I knew her again.

Pell. She will meet with stormy weather to-night.

Mél. Why did she set sail this dark night? I can scarcely see her now. Maybe she will meet with disaster.

Pell. See how quickly the night falls.

Gen. It is time to return, Pelléas. You show the way to Mélisande. I leave you for a moment to see our little Yniold.

Pell. To the seaward all is now dark.

Mél. But still I can see lights.

Pell. You see the other beacons. Do you hear the wild sea?

'Tis the wind that is rising. Let us find our way down. Will you place your hand here in mine.

Mél. But see—with flowers both my hands are quite filled.

Pell. Let me then take hold of your arm, for the path is very steep and the darkness has fallen. To-morrow I may be gone.

Mél. Oh, but why must you go?

ACT II.

Scene 1.

By the Fountain in the Park.

Pell. Do you know the fountain whither I have brought you? Often I linger here at noon in the shade, driven by the sun to seek the cool. Oh! 'Tis stifling to-day, even under the branches.

Mél. Look at the water!

Pell. 'Tis as cold as winter itself. I told you this was an old forgotten fountain. It is said that this water once possessed miraculous power, and the blind were cured of their blindness. To-day still they call it the fountain of the blind.

Mél. Are the blind no longer cured of their blindness?

Pell. No . . . now that the King himself is afflicted with blindness, they do not come.

Mél. Not a sound can be heard. Here it is quiet.

Pell. Even in this place there is a mysterious silence. You could hear the water sleep. Come here and rest awhile upon the edge of the fountain, in the shade of these branches which the sun's rays cannot pierce. . . .

Mél. Yes, let me lie down on the marble. . . . I want to see how deep it is. . . .

Pell. That has never been seen. Perhaps it reaches to the bottom of the sea. . . .

Mél. If there were something shining down there, maybe that I could see it. . . .

Pell. You are leaning out too far.

Mél. I will dip in my hand.

Pell. Do be careful, lest you slip. And let me take hold of your hand.

Mél. No, no. I would like to dip both of my hands. My poor hands seem as if they were ailing from the heat.

Pell. Oh! Oh! Do be careful! Do be careful! Mélisande! Mélisande! Oh! wondrous are your tresses!

Mél. I cannot reach. 'Tis too far to the water.

Pell. But your tresses are in it now.

Mél. Yes, they are as long as myself, much longer than my arms.

Pell. Was it not upon the water's edge that you and he met?

Mél. Yes.

Pell. What words did he say?

Mél. None. I remember nothing more.

Pell. Was he standing at your side?

Mél. Yes. I dreaded his embrace.

Pell. You did not wish to yield?

Mél. No.

Pell. Why did you seek to resist?

Mél. Oh! Oh! There, beneath the water, something seems to flash.

Pell. Oh, be careful, Mélisande. Do not risk a fall. What is that in your hands?

Mél. It is the ring he gave to me.

Pell. Do not play with it thus, on the edge of treacherous waters.

Mél. Fear not, my hands are firm.

Pell. How it gleams in the sun! But do not venture to throw it so high.

Mél. Oh!

Pell. You let it fall!

Mél. It has dropped from my hand.

Pell. Has it gone? Has it gone?

Mél. Yes, it has sunk in the water.

Pell. It is shimmering there.

Mél. You see it?

Pell. Yes, yes, just there.

Mél. Oh! Oh! It is so far away. No. No. That cannot be it. That cannot be it. My ring is lost for ever. I can see naught but the wave it has made. What can we do to get it back?

Pell. You must not allow a paltry ring thus to disturb you. It is naught. Besides we may perhaps yet find it. Or else maybe we shall find you another.

Mél. No. No. My ring will never more be found. Nor can others take its place on my hand. And yet I thought I had it, there, in my hand. It was between my hands, I thought, and yet it escaped from their hold. I threw it up too high as it gleamed in the sun.

Pell. Now come, we will return another day. Now come, it is time. They will be coming here to find us. The chimes of noon had just struck as your ring disappeared.

Mél. But how answer to Golaud if he asks where it is?

Pell. Tell him the truth . . . tell him the truth.

Scene 2.

In the Castle.

Gol. Ah! Ah!—all is well—I have not come to harm. But I do not understand how it happened thus to pass. I was riding in the forest at the chase when quite suddenly my horse was alarmed without cause. It was as if he had seen something out of the common. I recall the twelve strokes of noon had chimed a moment before. Upon the last chime my horse suddenly took fright and ran blindly among the trees of the forest. I cannot say what then happened to me, but I was thrown—my horse too must have fallen on top, for I felt then as if I had the whole forest upon me. And I thought that the blow had injured my heart. But my heart is a strong one. There is nothing more to fear.

Mél. May I now give you to drink?

Gol. My thanks. I have no thirst.

Mél. Or a softer pillow than this? For on this I see a little drop of your blood has made a stain.

Gol. No—'tis not worth the trouble.

Mél. Are you quite sure? And are you not in pain?

Gol. Oh, no. Not enough to mention. Tough as iron are my flesh and bone.

Mél. Close down your eyes and endeavour to sleep. And I shall stay with you throughout the night.

Gol. No, no. I do not wish that you should endure this for me. Of nothing have I need. Soon I shall slumber like a child. What's amiss, Mélisande? And why have you burst into tears?

Mél. Because . . . I am ill in this place.

Gol. Are you then ailing? In what way, what's amiss, Mélisande?

Mél. I do not know. I am ill in this place. I prefer that you should know it at once, my lord. I am not happy in this place.

Gol. What has happened to you? Has someone done you harm? Have you suffered injury here?

Mél. No, no. Here none has done me harm in word or deed. 'Tis not that at all.

Gol. But what is this that you are concealing? Tell me, tell

the whole of the truth, Mélisande. Is it the King? Is it my mother? Is it Pelléas?

Mél. No, no. It is not Pelléas, nor yet another. How can I make you understand me? 'Tis something here that is stronger than myself.

Gol. Come, come, do not be foolish, Mélisande. What can I do to help you? You are no more a child. If from me you desire to escape . . .

Mél. Oh, no—not you do I fear. . . . I would gladly escape hence with you. It is here that I cannot be happy. I feel that I shall not live very long.

Gol. That you must not say without any cause or they will call it madness. They will think it the whim of a child. Now come—is it Pelléas you'd fly from? Though I think that he seldom speaks to you.

Mél. Yes, he has spoken to me. He has no love for me, I fear I can read in his eyes. Yet when we meet he has spoken quite often.

Gol. Do not think ill of him for that. Since he was born he has been thus. He is strange in his manner. Soon he will change, you will see. He is young yet.

Mél. But that is not amiss—that is not amiss.

Gol. What is then? Can you not join with us in the kind of life we live? Is it dull for you here? I admit to you this castle is ancient and gloomy. The walls are cold and very deep. Those who live here are old and near to the grave. Sadness prevails in the surroundings as well, in the shadow of the trees, in the darkness of the sinister forest. But perhaps we can brighten all this if we try. Besides, much gladness, much joy cannot be had every day. But tell me what you wish for. No matter what. I will try to do all you desire.

Mél. Yes, 'tis true. Never do we look upon the sky. I have seen the sky to-day, but never before.

Gol. Is it then this that causes you tears, my gentle Mélisande? Is it nothing but that? You weep that you cannot see the sky? Now come, you must not shed tears for such a reason at your age. Is not the summer nearly come? You will see the sky every day. And next year we shall see. . . . Now come, give me your dear hand, give me both your tender little hands. Oh. These two little hands I could crush within my own, as they were flowers. . . . But—where is the ring that I placed on your hand?

Mél. The ring?

Gol. Yes, the ring of our betrothal. Have you lost it?

Mél. I think . . . it has dropped off my hand.

Gol. You dropped it? Do you know where you dropped it? I hope it is not lost.

Mél. No. It must have fallen. It must have slipped from my finger. But I know where it is.

Gol. Can you find it?

Mél. You know the place—you know the place. There is a cave by the sea.

Gol. Yes.

Mel. 'Tis there. 'Tis there. It only can be there. Yes, yes; now I remember. This morning I went that way seeking shells to serve as playthings to please our dear Yniold. There are some beautiful shells. It had fallen from my hand . . . when the tide overtook me. Then I had to hasten home without waiting to seek it.

Gol. Are you certain it is there?

Mél. Yes, yes. I am quite certain, for I know where it fell.

Gol. You must hurry to recover it quickly.

Mél. Now at once? Must I hasten? Although it is dark?

Gol. You must go now at once and recover it. Better it were to lose at once all I possess than to abandon the quest of that ring. You do not know what it is, nor what it means, nor whence it came. To-night the tide is going to be high. The waves will claim the ring before you. Do not delay.

Mél. I am afraid—alone I fear to go thither.

Gol. You must. Let anybody go with you. But you must go at once without waiting. Do you hear? Go now at once! You can ask Pelléas to go thither with you.

Mél. Pelléas? Go with Pelléas? But Pelléas will not consent.

Gol. Pelléas will consent to do all that you ask him. Pelléas I know better than you. Now go, tarry not. I shall not sleep until I know the ring is recovered.

Mél. Oh! Oh! I am very unhappy, all joy has gone for ever.

Scene 3.

A Grotto.

Pell. Yes, 'tis the place we are seeking. It is so dark that one cannot distinguish the entrance to the cave from the surrounding gloom. There are no stars to shed their light over here. Let us wait for the moon to make a break in the clouds. Then her light will penetrate far into the cave, and we can go in without fear. There are places where dangers abound; the narrow path is very

steep between two pools of which the depth is beyond all we know. It did not occur to me to carry a torch or even a lantern, but I hope that the moonlight will suffice us for our task. Have you ever ventured to step into the cavern?

Mél. No.

Pell. Enter now. . . . Go in that you may know to describe the place in which you lost the ring, in case he should ask you. Vast and superb is the cavern, full of purple and mysterious darkness. Sometimes when a light is kindled all is enchantment, crystals gleam, and the vault seems to shine as the sky with millions of stars. Let me hold your hand, and do not tremble thus. There is no danger to-night, and we will not go on when we can no longer see the pale radiance that comes from the sea. Is it the noise of the cave that fills you with terror? 'Tis the moan of the sea striking the vault. The waves are sad as though unhappy were the sea. Ah! the light of the moon.

Mél. Ah!

Pell. What's amiss?

Mél. Over there—over there . . .

Pell. Yes—already I had seen.

Mél. Let us now go. Let us now go.

Pell. They are three poor vagrants who have fallen asleep. There is scarcity of food, the land is distressed. Why should they seek out this dark place to rest?

Mél. Let us away . . . away. Let us away.

Pell. Do be careful. Do not speak thus aloud. We must not waken them. . . . Disturb not their rest, their slumber is deep. Come on.

Mél. Let me be; I would rather walk unaided.

Pell. We will return another day.

ACT III.

Scene 1.

A Tower of the Castle.

Mél. My tresses are so long, they reach the foot of the tower;
My tresses wait your coming on the walls of the tower.
And they wait all the day;
They waited all the day.
Good Saint Luke and Holy Mark,
Holy Mark and John the Divine,
On a Sunday I came,
On a Sunday at noon.

Pell. Hallo! Hallo, there!

Mél. Who is there?

Pell. I, I, 'tis I. . . . What are you doing at the window? You sing just like a bird whose home is afar.

Mél. My tresses I arrange for the night.

Pell. Can it be them I see on the wall? I had thought to see a light within your chamber.

Mél. I have opened the window, it was too warm in the tower. What a beautiful night. . . .

Pell. There are millions of stars beyond counting; I never saw so many as on this night; but the moon is still over the sea. You stand within the shadow, Mélisande. Lean outward to me. Let me see your fair tresses unbound.

Mél. Not thus would I be seen.

Pell. Oh! Oh! Mélisande. Oh! Oh, what beauty! You are wondrous fair. Oh, come near, near to me. May I not come nearer still to you?

Mél. It is too far; I cannot reach to you. I lean out as far as I can.

Pell. I cannot climb up any more. Give me, give to-night at least your hand . . . for I must go to-morrow. 'Tis our farewell.

Mél. No, no, no.

Pell. Yes, yes. I go. To-morrow I must leave. Now give me your hand, your hand; let your little hand meet my kisses.

Mél. I refuse you my hand if you go away.

Pell. Give it, give it quickly.

Mél. You will not go away?

Pell. I shall wait, I shall wait.

Mél. There I see a rose, a bloom in the darkness.

Pell. Oh, where? I see naught but the lank willow branches hanging over the wall.

Mél. Not there. But further down the path. 'Tis there among the verdure.

Pell. 'Tis not a rose that blooms there. I shall look for it later. First you must give your hand to me, give me your hand.

Mél. 'Tis here, take it. I can lean no more out of the window.

Pell. My lips cannot reach as far as your little hand.

Mél. I can lean no more out of the window. Already I fear I shall fall. Oh! Oh! Now my hair is flowing down the tower.

Pell. Oh! Oh! What do I feel? 'Tis your hair, your tresses flowing down to me. All the wealth of your tresses, Mélisande,

all the wealth of your tresses now flows from the tower. It is here in my hands, where my lips can caress it. It is here in my arms; it is here encircling my neck. I shall not open my hands through the night.

Mél. Let me be, let me be! Now you are making me fall.

Pell. No, no, no. . . . Never did I behold such fair tresses as yours, Mélisande. Look, look down, they fall from such a height, and yet they cover my shoulders and my heart; and my body is covered down to my knees. And they are soft, soft as if they had fallen from the skies. I no longer can see the heavens through your hair. Look here, look here. My two hands cannot contain all your hair; it overflows and hangs on the willowy branches. Your tresses are alive as birds in my hands, and they love me, they love me more than you.

Mél. Let me be, let me be—for somebody might come.

Pell. No, no, no, I shall not give you your freedom to-night. Be my prisoner now until the dawn—all through the night—all through the night.

Mél. Pelléas, Pelléas.

Pell. Here I knot them, I tie them to the green bushes, and you cannot escape . . . you shall escape no more. Your tresses, your tresses, my kisses in your hair . . . my pain is at rest, it is buried in your hair. Do you hear how my kisses travel up your hair? They are climbing upon your golden hair . . . and each of your tresses must bring one. . . . You see, you see, and now my hands are free. My hands are open, but you can nevermore escape.

Mél. Oh! Oh! I am in pain. What is that, Pelléas? What is that flying round my head?

Pell. 'Tis only the doves that are flying from the tower. . . . I disturbed them just now, and they are flying.

Mél. They nest round the tower, Pelléas. Now let us part, go away, or they will never return.

Pell. But why should they return no more?

Mél. They will lose their way, the night is so dark. Let me go—let me lift up my head in freedom. . . . A footstep now I hear, let me go. 'Tis Golaud. I think it is Golaud. He was there as we spoke.

Pell. Take care, take care, for your hair is caught in the bushes. In the darkness it caught and still it is held. Take care, take care—it is dark.

Gol. What are you doing here?

Pell. What am I doing here? I . . .

Gol. Behaving like a child. Mélisande, do not lean so far out

from your chamber window, or you will fall. . . . Are you not aware, it is late? It is close upon midnight. To play thus is childish late in the night. But you are very young.

Scene 2.

A Vault beneath the Castle.

Gol. Now, be careful; follow me, follow me. I do not think you ever have set foot in these vaults.

Pell. Yes, only once, long ago, 'twas many years ago.

Gol. Come here, and look at the water I told you about. Do you smell an odour as of death? Go further along this narrow ledge to the rock beyond and then look down. As the breath of the dead it strikes your face. You can look, be not afraid . . . I will take care, let me hold . . . No, no, not your hand! That might easily slip—your arm. Now see you the abyss, Pelléas? Pelléas?

Pell. Yes, I see to the bottom of the abyss. But is it the light that is trembling thus? You . . .

Gol. Yes—only the lantern. You see, just then I shook it, to throw light on the walls.

Pell. 'Tis stifling here—we'll go.

Gol. Yes, we'll go.

[*They ascend to the open air.*

Pell. Ah, at last I can breathe. . . . Just now, for a moment I thought I should be ill in those vast gloomy caverns, and once I felt as if I would fall. The air was heavy with moisture and foul as a dew of molten lead, and the black darkness was murderously poisonous and noisome. But now I breathe the air that comes from the sea. And the breeze is so cool. The sea! Cool and fresh as blossom that opens at dawn, the tenderest bloom of the morning. Look! The gardeners are watering the flowers round the lawn, and the perfumes of wet foliage and roses in bloom travel on the breeze. It is near to the hour of noon; and the blooms are veiled within a purple shade. And now 'tis noon. 'Tis the sound of the bells, and children are going to the beach to cool themselves in the waves. . . . Look, our mother is there with Mélisande, standing at the window of the tower. . . .

Gol. Yes, they have gone thither to seek respite from the sunshine. Whilst we speak of Mélisande, nothing escaped me of what was said or done at the window late last night. Of course, I know, you were children at play; but that which I witnessed must not be repeated, for she is very fragile, and just now she needs the

greatest care because very soon perhaps she will be a mother; and excitement or shock might easily bring her to harm. 'Tis not the first time I have noticed you are far too much together, and there may be danger for both. Remember, you are the elder. It will suffice to have warned you in time.

Scene 3.

Before the Castle.

Gol. Come, we'll rest upon this shady seat, Yniold. Sit here on my knee. From here we'll see all that happens yonder beneath the trees. Many days now I have scarcely seen you at all. You have deserted me too; you always go to dear little mother. Look, the seat we are resting on stands closely under little mother's window. At this very moment she perhaps may be at her evening prayer. But you know, Yniold, that she is often with your uncle Pelléas, is she not?

Yni. Yes, yes, I know, dearest father, when you are not about.

Gol. Ah. Look, over yonder a man with a lantern is passing by. But I am told they are not good friends. I hear that constantly they disagree . . . no? Is it true?

Yni. Yes, yes, 'tis true.

Gol. Yes? Ah! Ah! Can you tell me the cause of their quarrelling?

Yni. 'Tis the door that they speak of.

Gol. How so? 'Tis the door that they speak of! What do they say about the door?

Yni. They have said that the door must not be open.

Gol. Who is it says it must not be open? And why do they quarrel over that?

Yni. I do not know, dearest father. 'Tis perhaps about the lantern.

Gol. Listen, I did not ask about the lantern. 'Tis the door we were discussing. Do not put your fingers thus in your mouth. Behave!

Yni. Dearest father, dearest father, I will not do it now.

Gol. Look up; now what are you crying about? Is anything wrong?

Yni. Oh. Oh, dearest father. You're hurting me now.

Gol. It cannot be. Where have you been hurt? 'Twas not with intent.

Yni. 'Tis here. 'Tis here, 'tis my arm that hurts.

Gol. 'Twas not with intent; look up, dry your wet eyes; you shall have a present to-morrow, I vow.

Yni. What, dearest father?

Gol. Why, a bow and a quiver. But now all about the door you must tell me.

Yni. And real big arrows?

Gol. Yes, and very big arrows. Can you tell me why they desire that the door shall not be open? Speak up, will you answer me now? No, no; now do not begin to cry again. 'Twas not an angry word. And what do they speak about when together?

Yni. Pelléas and dear little mother?

Gol. Yes; of what do they speak?

Yni. Of me; they speak of me.

Gol. And what do they say of you?

Yni. They say that I shall be very tall.

Gol. Ah, 'tis goading me to madness. Here am I groping in the dark as a blind man seeking treasure from a stormy sea. I am a child astray 'mid the dangers of the forest—and you. . . . Listen now, Yniold, my thoughts did stray. We must have a long and serious talk. Does not Pelléas speak of me with little mother on the days when I am far from home?

Yni. Yes, yes, dearest father.

Gol. Ah!—tell me what they say of me?

Yni. They tell me that I shall grow handsome and big like you.

Gol. They let you stay with them?

Yni. Why, yes, they do, dearest father.

Gol. Do they not tell you to run away and play elsewhere?

Yni. No, dearest father. They are sad when I am not with them.

Gol. They are sad? How do you know they are sad?

Yni. Because in the darkness they always weep.

Gol. Ah! Ah!

Yni. But the darkness makes one weep. . . .

Gol. Yes, yes.

Yni. She is sickly, dearest father.

Gol. Ah, ah! Give me patience, oh, God, give me patience!

Yni. What, dearest father?

Gol. Naught, naught, my Yniold. I but thought that a wolf I saw out there. Maybe sometimes they embrace? No?

Yni. Kiss each other, dearest father? No, no. Ah. Yes, dearest father. Yes. Once they did. . . . It was during the rain.

Gol. Did you see them embrace? In what way, I ask, and what kind of embrace?

Yni. Just like that, dearest father, just like that. Ah, Ah! What a rough beard, dearest father. How it tickles, how it scratches! How very grey it is getting, dearest father, and so is all your hair, all grey, all grey. Ah, ah, dear little mother has lighted her lantern. It is light, dearest father; it is light.

Gol. Yes, 'tis getting lighter now.

Yni. Shall we go there now, dearest father; shall we go there now?

Gol. Where are we to go?

Yni. Where it is light, dearest father.

Gol. No, no, my Yniold—let us remain here in the shadow. I know not yet. As yet I know not all. I think Pelléas must be mad.

Yni. No, dearest father, he is not mad; he is very kind.

Gol. Would you see dear little mother?

Yni. Yes, yes, see her I must.

Gol. Do not make a noise; and now let me lift you up to the window. It is too lofty for me, although I am so tall. Do not make the slightest noise; dear little mother would be very afraid. Can you see? Can you see little mother?

Yni. Yes. Oh, it is light.

Gol. Only mother?

Yni. Yes. . . . No, no . . . my uncle Pelléas is there as well.

Gol. He . . .

Yni. Ah! Ah, dearest father, you are hurting me.

Gol. It is naught, be still; I did not mean to hurt; what see you, what see you, Yniold? My foot did slip; speak not so loud. What's afoot?

Yni. They're doing naught, dearest father.

Gol. Are they near to each other?

Yni. No, dearest father.

Gol. And . . . and the bed? Are they near the bed?

Yni. The bed, dearest father? I do not see the bed.

Gol. Less loud; they will hear you. Are they now speaking?

Yni. No, dearest father. Now they do not speak.

Gol. What do they do?

Yni. They are looking at the lantern.

Gol. Are they both?

Yni. Yes, dearest father.

Gol. Yet they do not speak?

Yni. No, dearest father. And they do not close their eyes.

Gol. And are they moving closer together?

Yni. No, dearest father, they never close their eyes now. I am very frightened.

Gol. What has frightened you so? Now watch, now watch them.

Yni. Dearest father, can I not come down yet?

Gol. No, watch them.

Yni. Oh, but I shall scream, dearest father. Do let me come down now. Do let me come down now.

Gol. Come, and we will find out what has happened there.

ACT IV.

Scene 1.

A Room in the Castle.

Pell. Whither now? I have something to tell you to-night. Shall I see you?

Mél. Yes.

Pell. I have just now left my father's bedroom. He fares well. Lately the doctor has said that he now is safe, and he knew my voice. Then he took my hand in his and said to me in the absent manner he has since he is ailing: "Is it you, Pelléas? Strange, I was not aware of it before, but on your features is the look so grave and friendly of those who have not long to live. You must go abroad, you must go abroad." 'Tis mysterious; I will surely obey. My mother heard him speak, and wept tears of joy. Have you not yet felt the effect? All the household seems like returning to life. They are breathing again, and footsteps are heard. Now listen; I hear a voice behind the door, a whisper; quickly, quickly, answer quickly, where shall I see you?

Mél. Where you wish.

Pell. In the park, by the fountain where the blind seek healing? Say yes, you will come?

Mél. Yes.

Pell. It will be our last farewell, for I go abroad as my dear father advised. You will see me no more.

Mél. Oh, speak not like that, Pelléas. You I shall ever see; I always shall look on your face.

Pell. You will look, I fear, in vain. . . . So far will I be that I shall be out of your sight.

Mél. Why are you so changed, Pelléas? I no longer understand what you say.

Pell. Now go, we must not stay. Again I hear behind this door a whisper.

Arkel. Now we know Pelléas' father will rise from his bed, and the harrowing blight of sickness, the handmaiden of death, has departed from here, joy will return, and the light of the sun penetrate into these gloomy halls. 'Tis none too soon, for since you came to us all the life of this stricken house was passed in whispering near to a sick room, and, in truth, I felt sorry for you, Mélisande. I looked at you, and you were there, unconscious of your surroundings, and your eyes had the strange and absent look of a soul that is awaiting in a garden some stroke of fate, on a summer's day. I can't explain it to you, but it has pained me to see you like that, for you are too young and too lovely already to live, day and night, in the chilly air of death. But you will see a change come over all. Years have taught me—and maybe 'tis of life the greatest and worthiest lesson—years have taught me to have faith in the kinship and ultimate truth of events, and their constancy. I ever have seen that those who were young and fair have brought with them a chain of events that were young and fair, and gave joy. And to-day it is you, who are to lead the way towards the new era that I foresee. Come to me, and tell me why your eyes are cast down and why you do not speak? Since you came to this house I have kissed your brow only once, the day that you arrived. And yet I think for the aged 'tis needful sometimes that they touch with their lips, the brow of a woman, the cheek of a babe, that they may not forget the sweetness of life and drive away for a moment the messengers of death. Do you shrink from lips that are withered? Oh, how my heart has pitied you all this time.

Mél. Dear father, I have not been so unhappy.

Ark. Let me look upon your face like this, near to mine, for a while. One has such a craving for beauty when death is at hand.

Gol. Pelléas leaves to-night.

Ark. A trace of blood on your brow. How is that?

Gol. Naught, naught. I was forcing my way through hedges and brambles.

Mél. Bend your head down to me, my lord; I will wipe the blood from your brow.

Gol. But I will not be touched by you, do you hear? Go

hence. To you I did not speak. And where is my weapon? . . . Hither came I seeking my sword.

Mél. 'Tis here; where we do pray.

Gol. Bring it to me. They have again picked up a peasant who has perished of hunger on the seashore. One would think they died thus purposely under our eyes! Now then, where's my sword? Why do you shiver and quake? I am not going to strike. I did but wish to judge more closely of its sharpness. I employ not a sword on such an errand. Are you scrutinising me as a beggar? I have not come to ask you for assistance. Do you hope to read in my eyes my inmost thought without revealing to mine your hidden secrets. Do you think I have knowledge or suspicion? Do you see those big eyes? One would think they were proud of their riches.

Ark. I see naught but an innocent candour.

Gol. Naught but innocent candour! They are more innocent than children, purer than those of a lamb newly born. To God himself those eyes would give lessons in candour. Naught but innocent candour! Do you hear? I am so near to them that I can feel when the eyelids are lowered; yet, in despite, easier it would be to read beyond the grave than to read what is concealed in those eyes. Naught but innocent candour! More than innocence dwells there. One would think in them angels from heaven were always attending a baptism. I know them well, those eyes. I have seen them at work. Close your eyes. Close your eyes. Or for ever they soon will be closed. Your hand do not thus press on your quivering bosom; that which I have said is quite simple. I am not concealing a purpose. If I harboured a purpose why should I not have brought it to the light? Ah! ah! You'd attempt to escape? Come here. Place your hand within mine. Ah! Your hands burn with fever. Get you away! And your flesh is repellent. Get you away! Gone is the time when you could have escaped. You shall follow me on your knees! To your knees at my feet! Ah! ah! Now shall your hair serve me at last to some advantage. To right, then down on that side! To left, then back on this side! Absalom! Absalom! To the front, and then backwards! At my feet now! At my feet now! Do you see, do you see, how I can laugh like an old fool?

Ark. Golaud?

Gol. Henceforth you may do as you please, do you see? For my part I shall take no notice of this. I am too old; and then, I cannot spy upon them. The occasion will come. Then, of course. . . . Oh. Of course.

Ark. Is he drunk? Is it madness?

Mél. No . . . no, but he loves me no more. How unhappy I am!

Ark. If I were God, the hearts of men would have my pity.

Scene 2.

By the Fountain in the Park.

Pell. The last night has come. . . . 'Tis the last night . . . and all must end this evening. Like a child I have been playing, toying with something that I did not understand. Dreaming I have played amid the snares and traps which fate doth set us. What was it that made me so suddenly wake? I will fly, shouting all my joy and all my pain, just like a blind man who would flee from the burning of his home. And I shall tell her that I must fly. . . . It is late, and she may not come. It might be better did I not see her again. This time I must have a care to look closely at her. There are in her features beauties that I cannot recall. It would seem as if sometimes a hundred years had passed since I had seen her. And I have not yet ventured to look in her eyes. Thus naught remains with me if I leave her like this . . . but memories of her. They would be like unto water I bore in a satchel made of muslin. I must meet her again for the last time and see to the depths of her heart. And I must tell her all that I have been leaving unsaid.

Mél. Pelléas.

Pell. Mélisande—is it you, Mélisande?

Mél. Yes.

Pell. Come to me. Do not remain within the silver moonlight. Come to me, we have so much to whisper to each other. Come to me beneath this friendly tree.

Mél. Let me stay within the light.

Pell. But we might be seen from the windows of the tower. Come to me, for here we have no cause to tremble. Be careful, or we may be seen.

Mél. But I would be seen!

Pell. Why is that? You contrived to leave the house without being seen?

Mél. Yes, while Golaud was asleep.

Pell. It is late. In an hour's time the gates will be bolted. We need to be careful. Why came you to our tryst so late?

Mél. 'Twas your brother, who had a fateful dream. . . . Also

my dress that caught on a nail as I was escaping. Look here, my raiment is torn. It was this that delayed me and I ran . . .

Pell. My poor dear Mélisande. Now to touch you I am nigh afraid. You are still quite out of breath, just like a timorous bird. 'Tis for me that you hastened like this? I can hear your heart beat, just as if it were my own. Come this way, stay near to me.

Mél. Oh, why do you laugh?

Pell. I do not laugh; or else I laugh with joy and do not know. Maybe there is more cause for us to weep.

Mél. We came to this place together a long time ago. Now I remember.

Pell. Yes—many long months ago. But then . . . then I did not know. Do you know why I have begged of you to come here to-night?

Mél. No.

Pell. 'Tis because perhaps it is the last time that we meet. I am obliged to go away from you.

Mél. Why tell me always you must go away?

Pell. Why must I tell you what already you know? Do you not know what I am about to tell you?

Mél. Oh no, oh no, I do not know.

Pell. Do you not know the reason why I now must leave you? Do you not know that it is because . . . I love you?

Mél. I love you too.

Pell. What have you said, Mélisande? I almost failed to hear what you said. Now the ice has been broken with iron heated red. You spoke those words with a voice that echoed from afar. I almost failed to hear what you said. You love me? You love in return? You have loved me for long?

Mél. For all our days. Since that day when we met.

Pell. Now the sound of your voice has passed over the sea in the springtime, and its magic I never heard until now, and it falls like soft rain on my heart. So frankly did you say those words, as an angel might have responded. I can scarcely believe it, Mélisande. Is it I that you love? What has kindled your love? Is this true, that you have said? Is there no room for doubt? Have you not told an untruth to gladden my sorrow?

Mél. No, I never speak untruths, except to your brother.

Pell. Oh, how you uttered those words! Your voice, your voice, 'tis as cool water, as fresh and as clear. On my lips it is pure as crystal water. 'Tis as cool as spring water on my hands.

Give your hands, give your hands to me! Oh, how small are your fingers! How could I but worship one so rich in beauty! I had never seen such beauty until you came here. I knew no rest, seeking everywhere, in those great halls, through the gardens, over all the country, and never found the beauty I sought. Now it is here, I have found you, I have found you. I did not think there could be in the world such a beautiful woman. Are you there? I no longer hear your soft breath.

Mél. Because I want to see you.

Pell. Why do your eyes now so gravely look at me? The light already is failing. Under this tree we're in darkness. Come where it is lighter. Here in the shade we cannot see how happy we are. Come. . . . Come. We have very little time now.

Mél. No—no, let us stay here. 'Tis in the dark that I am most near to you.

Pell. Where are your eyes? Are you evading me? At this moment you are not thinking of me.

Mél. Yes, yes, I think only of you.

Pell. Your eyes were then elsewhere.

Mél. I see you then elsewhere.

Pell. What are you thinking? What's amiss? You do not seem to be so happy.

Mél. Oh yes, yes, I am happy, but I am anxious.

Pell. What is that noise? They're closing the gates.

Mél. Yes, the gates have just been bolted.

Pell. Then we cannot enter now? 'Twas the bolts that you heard? Now listen. Oh, listen. Drawn are the chains now. It is too late. It is too late.

Mél. 'Tis well. 'Tis well.

Pell. You . . . 'Tis done. . . . 'Tis done. No longer is it ours to will. All is forgone, all is restored. All is attained to-night. Come, come, my heart is madly beating as if it were bursting Oh, hear it. My throbbing heart is stifling me almost. Come. Ah! How enchanting is the darkness.

Mél. Is there not a man lurking behind?

Pell. None that I can see there.

Mél. I heard a stealthy sound.

Pell. I can hear but your heart beating in the dark.

Mél. I hear a crackling among the dead leaves.

Pell. 'Tis the wind that has suddenly dropped. To our embraces it has been a silent friend.

Mél. How large and tall are our shadows to-night!

Pell. They are embracing to the end of the path. Ah, how far from us they still embrace! Look yonder! Look there!

Mél. Ah. He is hid by that tree.

Pell. Who?

Mél. Golaud.

Pell. Golaud? Where then? I do not see.

Mél. There—beyond our two shadows.

Pell. Yes, yes, I have seen. Do not let us turn round suddenly.

Mél. He has drawn his sword.

Pell. And mine was forgotten.

Mél. He has seen us locked in an embrace.

Pell. He knows not yet that we too have seen. Now do not stir, nor turn your eyes out yonder. He would attack us at once. He still is watching. He has not yet made a movement. Escape, escape, fly at once, over here! Here I shall wait, I shall hold him fast.

Mél. No.

Pell. Escape!

Mél. No.

Pell. He has seen all. We'll both be killed.

Mél. 'Tis well!

Pell. He comes.

Mél. 'Tis well!

Pell. Oh! Kiss me, oh, kiss me!

Mél. Yes, yes, yes.

Pell. Oh! Oh! All the stars on me are falling.

Mél. And on me too, they fall on me.

Pell. Still closer, still closer, all mine.

Mél. All thine. . . . (*Together:* All mine, all thine.) Oh, oh, all my courage has left me! Why am I such a coward? Ah!

ACT V.

A Room in the Castle.

Doctor. If she were indeed to die, so slight a wound could not be the cause. Such a blow would not slay a bird. Therefore 'tis not you that did her to death, good noble lord. Cast not the blame upon yourself. Besides, all is not said! We may yet restore her to life.

Ark. No, no. I have noticed that we lower the voice in her room without knowing. It is not a good omen. See how peaceful is her sleep and how deep. One would think that her soul for ever was cold.

Gol. I have slain without cause. It would soften a heart of stone and move it to pity. Their embraces were innocent, just as children kiss. They were brother and sister. And I—all in a moment. 'Twas in spite of myself, do you see, 'twas in spite of myself.

Doc. Have a care, I think she is awake.

Mél. Open wide the window. Open wide the window.

Ark. Is this the window that you mean, Mélisande?

Mél. No . . . No. . . . Open that big window, let me see.

Ark. Is not the air from the sea too cold for her to-night?

Doc. Open! Open!

Mél. I thank you. Is not that the sun that is setting?

Ark. Yes. It is the sun that is sinking in the sea. It is late. . . . But how do you feel now, Mélisande?

Mél. Well . . . well. . . . Why do you ask me how I feel? Surely I was never feeling better! Yet I seem to know to-day what before I did not know.

Ark. What is that? I do not understand.

Mél. Neither do I understand the words that I say. . . . Do you hear? I do not know what I have said. I do not know what I once knew. I say not what I wish to say.

Ark. Yes, yes, you do. It makes me quite happy to hear you speaking like that. You have been delirious more than once of late. We could not understand you then. Now that we can, that seems like a bad dream.

Mél. I do not know. Are you alone in the room, dear father?

Ark. No. A learned physician too is here whose art has saved you.

Mél. Ah!

Ark. And then, beside him, another is here.

Mél. Who is it?

Ark. 'Tis . . . But you must not be afraid. It is one who wishes you no harm, I am certain. And he will go, if you're afraid. Sorrow tears at his heart.

Mél. Who is it?

Ark. 'Tis—you are his wife—'tis Golaud.

Mél. Golaud is at hand? Then why is he not here at my side?

Gol. Mélisande, Mélisande.

Mél. Is it you, Golaud? I scarcely recognised you as you came. 'Tis the evening sun that dazzles my eyes. But why do your eyes seek the wall? You are aged, you have grown thin. Is it very long that we two have not met?

Gol. Would you kindly leave me here for a while, my very good friends? I promise you to leave the door wide open. Just a moment, I pray. There is something I must say to her now. If I speak not I cannot die in peace—grant my wish! You can surely return in a moment. Do not refuse to grant my wish, guilty wretch that I am. Mélisande! Have you pity for me, just as I do pity you? Mélisande, will you not forgive, Mélisande?

Mél. Yes—yes—you are forgiven. . . . What have I to forgive?

Gol. I caused you so much pain, Mélisande. I can never confess all the guilt that is mine. But I can see. All is clear to me, as clear as the sun, from the very first day. And all was my own fault, all that has happened to us . . . all that shall happen to us. Were I able to tell you, you would see just as I see all. I see all! But I loved you so! I loved you so! Someone is dying here and to-day. . . . I am near unto death. And I beg you to speak. 'Tis a question I would ask. But, take it not amiss . . . speak the truth; the truth must be spoken to one about to die. 'Tis a dying man craving the truth, for without it he cannot be at rest. Give me your oath to tell me only the truth.

Mél. Yes.

Gol. Did you not love Pelléas?

Mél. Why, yes. I loved him well. . . . Is he there?

Gol. You do not understand. Do you wish to understand me? I believe, and I wonder . . . pay heed to me . . . I ask you now to tell me if you loved as 'tis sinful to love? Confess . . . was your love a guilty passion? Speak, speak. Yes—tell me.

Mél. No, no—our love was not a guilty passion. Why do you ask me such a thing?

Gol. Mélisande, as God is merciful, tell me now the truth.

Mél. Do you think I have not told you the truth?

Gol. Tell me no more lies at the moment of death.

Mél. But who is going to die? Is it I?

Gol. You . . . you and I . . . I as well, after you. And at the end there must be truth. Truth must reign between us at the end. Do you hear? Tell me all. Tell me all. I have forgiven all.

Mél. Wherefore am I to die? Tell me, I do not know.

Gol. Hasten, now that you know, it is time. Hasten! Tell me; I want the truth; the truth I want.

Mél. You want the truth? . . . You want the truth?

Gol. Are you there, Mélisande, are you there? She is looking so strange. Mélisande, are you there? Yes, yes, you may come in now! I have not learned. It has been useless. She is already

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far away. Now I shall never know. I shall die without knowing, in my blindness.

Ark. What have you done? You will hasten her death.

Gol. I have killed her already.

Ark. Mélisande.

Mél. Is it you . . . dear father?

Ark. Yes, my daughter. Is there aught I can do now?

Mél. Is it true that 'tis nearly winter?

Ark. And what has made you ask me that?

Mél. I feel so cold, and the autumn leaves have fallen.

Ark. Are you cold? If you would let us close the windows.

Mél. No . . . not until the autumn sun has dipped under the sea. Slowly, slowly it sets, and then 'tis the coming of winter.

Ark. You do not love the cold?

Mél. Ah, no. I fear the cold. Winter fills me with dread.

Ark. You're better now.

Mél. Yes, yes. All my cares have now left me.

Ark. Shall I bring you the child?

Mél. What child?

Ark. 'Tis your child, 'tis your little daughter.

Mél. Where's my baby?

Ark. She's here.

Mél. It is strange. I cannot lift my arms to cradle my child.

Ark. That is because you still are feeble. I shall hold her myself. Now see me.

Mél. Laughter has she none. She is so tiny. I believe she too will weep. She has my pity.

Gol. What is that? Why do these women come here? What purpose brings them here?

Doc. The servants have come.

Ark. But which of us has told them to come?

Doc. It was not I.

Gol. Who has told you to come here? What brings you here? What are you about? What have you come here to do? You cannot even speak. Answer me!

Ark. Hush, do not raise your voice. She's about to sleep. See, her eyelids are closed.

Gol. It is not . . .?

Doc. No . . . no . . . look here, she is still breathing.

Ark. With tears her eyes are flowing. 'Tis the soul of her now that is weeping. Why does she hold out her arms like that? Does she want aught?

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Doc. 'Tis for the child, no doubt. 'Tis the effort of the mother fighting . . .

Gol. Has the time come? Has the time come? You must now tell me . . . tell me . . . tell me.

Doc. It may be.

Gol. At this moment. Oh . . . Oh! I must speak with her once more. Mélisande, Mélisande. Leave me alone, I pray you leave me here with her.

Ark. No, no. Do not approach. Disturb not her peace. Do not speak to her. Do you understand? A soul is so tender.

Gol. 'Twas not of my doing. 'Twas not of my doing.

Ark. Have a care! Have a care! 'Tis time to lower your voice for her sake. You must not trouble her now, for the soul that is passing is silent. And alone must the soul go its journey. She has shyly borne her cruel lot. Oh, but the sadness! Golaud, the dreadful sadness of all that we have seen! Oh! Oh! . . . what is that?

Doc. They have understood.

Ark. But I saw naught. Are you quite sure?

Doc. Yes. Yes.

Ark. I did not hear a sound . . . like that . . . so sudden. . . . She has departed in silence. You must not tarry here, Golaud. It is silence she needs now the most. Away, now come. It is dreadful! But the guilt lies not on you. She was only a peaceful little soul that has suffered and did not complain. 'Twas just a timid soul, a frail mysterious being like all humanity. There she lies as if she were no more than elder sister to her child. Now come. We must not allow the child to remain so near the death-bed, for she must live now, she must live to replace her. 'Tis the turn of her poor little daughter.

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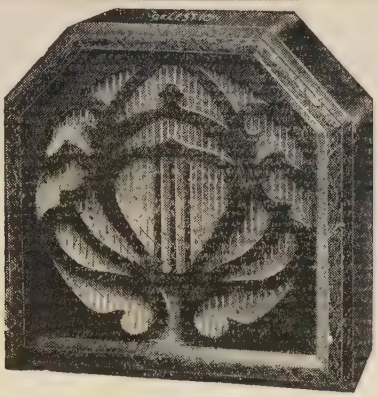

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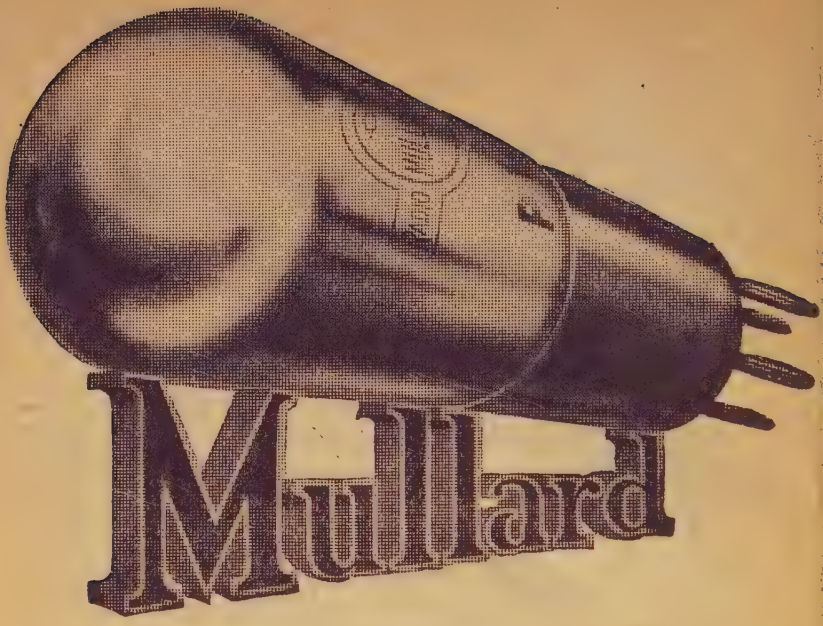

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